

# **Chapter 1: Purpose of the General Plan and General Plan Goals**

## **Purpose of the 2025 General Plan**

Since adoption of the 1984 Fresno General Plan (Exhibit 3), the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area has continued to experience substantial increases in its population, physical size, economic activity, transportation network, educational institutions, and cultural/recreational facilities. Much of this growth has contributed to the vitality of the community with high quality residential and commercial communities, innovative social and educational endeavors, increasing economic diversity and more efficient use of resources. However, along with these growth-related advances have come many challenges for the community including increasing unemployment, declining older neighborhoods and property values, excessive demand upon limited public facilities and services including parks and schools, and finite air, water, and land resources.

The 2025 Fresno General Plan (Exhibit 4) provides a substantially revised and updated strategy to address these current issues and deficiencies, reinforce existing community assets and improve the quality of life of the community as a whole. It provides long-range planning strategies for the continued development, enhancement, and revitalization of the Fresno Metropolitan Area through the first two decades of the 21st century and beyond. These planning strategies acknowledge the consequences of past land development patterns; consider present problems, assets, and community values; and recognize the critical significance of land use, development and resource allocation decisions (both governmental and private) in determining the quality of life experienced by Fresno's residents in the future.

Based upon the consideration of these factors, the 2025 Fresno General Plan is intended to serve as a guide to enable government at all levels, private enterprise, community groups, and individual citizens to make decisions and utilize community resources in a manner that will realize progress toward a common vision of a measurably enhanced physical, economic, and social environment. It is intended to accomplish this purpose through the use of both the map and text of the general plan itself as well as through the more direct guidance provided by the city's adopted community and specific plans. The community and specific plans are tailored to the specialized needs and concerns of the nine identifiable community areas within the existing Fresno Sphere of Influence (Exhibit 2). Community and/or specific plans will be prepared to provide more direct guidance for development of the proposed 2025 general plan North Growth Area and Southeast Growth Area (Exhibit 1).

This update attempts to achieve this purpose by making the general plan document more "user friendly" not only for those individuals who develop land but especially for the public policy decision makers (i.e., the city council and planning commission) as well as the general public. This stated purpose of the 2025 General Plan update evolves directly from the planning procedures adopted with the city's 1987 Local Planning and Procedures Ordinance (Article 6, Chapter 12, Fresno Municipal Code). This ordinance not only established the guidelines for the preparation and adoption of this general plan update, but also encourages active citizen, planning commission, and city council involvement in the planning process with the idea that the general plan document will be user oriented.

It is also noted that during 1982 and 1983 there were extensive meetings among the local jurisdictions of Fresno County, Fresno City, and the City of Clovis regarding issues of land use planning, the provision of urban services, and annexation. As a result of these meetings, a Joint Resolution on Metropolitan Planning was adopted by the above jurisdictions, providing direction for cooperative planning efforts over a period of 15 years. This general plan update has been conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the 1983 resolution.

California State Planning and Zoning Law (Government Code, Section 65300) also requires that the city prepare and adopt a general plan which addresses the seven following mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The mandated elements of the general plan must be legally adequate and internally consistent with one another. In addition, state law permits the city to address additional issues such as public facilities and services, energy, recreation, or any other subject that relates to the physical development of the city.

Together with the community and specific plans, the general plan has been designed to

1. Provide a blueprint for the growth of the city through the year 2025;
2. Guide the expansion of infrastructure and public services to meet the community needs;
3. Create an effective planning tool which is both efficient and responsive to citizens' needs;
4. Create a "user friendly" document that is easily understood and administered;
5. Incorporate policy and land use changes made through the community and specific planning process;
6. Provide appropriate planning and public services analysis for the expansion of the urban areas of the city;
7. Meet the requirements of state and local planning and zoning law.

## **General Plan Goals**

The focal point of the general plan vision is the endeavor to judiciously utilize available resources to accommodate a moderate population growth while limiting outward expansion beyond the city's present planned urban boundary and substantially enhancing the established community's physical and social environment through revitalization of Fresno's existing urban core. Beyond this focal point, this vision is defined by 17 essential goals that have been identified through extensive discourse among elected office holders, professional staff, and representative citizen advocates of the community. Broad general plan goals intended to address potential opportunities as well as problems have been formulated and enumerated below, whereas detailed objectives and policies for carrying out the goals are presented in Chapter 4, Plan Elements, of this document. These goals are as follows:

1. Enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Fresno and plan for the projected population within the moderately expanded Fresno urban boundary in a manner which will respect physical, environmental, fiscal, economic, and social issues.

2. Pursue coordinated regional planning with Fresno and Madera Counties and the City of Clovis.
3. Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods, the downtown, and historical resources.
4. Promote a partnership among citizens, industry, and government which fosters well-planned and efficiently processed development.
5. Support the Growth Alternatives Alliance "Landscape of Choice-Principles and Strategies" as based upon the Ahwahnee Group Principles, both of which are included in the Appendix.
6. Coordinate land uses and circulation systems to promote a viable and integrated multi-modal transportation network.
7. Manage growth to balance Fresno's urban form while providing an adequate public service delivery system, which is fairly and equitably financed.
8. Provide opportunity for a variety of affordable housing throughout the Metropolitan Area.
9. Provide activity centers and intensity corridors within plan areas to create a mix of land uses and amenities to foster community identity and reduce travel.
10. Provide quality open space, park and recreational facilities and programs to support the projected population.
11. Protect, preserve, and enhance significant biological, archaeological, and paleontological resources and critical natural resources, including, but not limited to, air, water, agricultural soils, minerals, plants, and wildlife resources.
12. Develop urban design strategies to improve Fresno's visual image and enhance its form and function.
13. Plan for a healthy business and diversified employment environment, and provide adequate timely services to ensure that Fresno is competitive in the marketplace.
14. Protect and improve public health and safety.
15. Recognize, respect, and plan for Fresno's cultural, social, and ethnic diversity.
16. Work cooperatively with the local agricultural industry to conserve prime farmland and respect its importance as Fresno County's base economic resource.
17. Encourage fiscal and local agency planning policies that will assist in the annexation of unincorporated county islands within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence.